Preschool–Grade 6

Ruth and Naomi

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Ruth stayed loyal to Naomi and chose Naomi's God, and God took care of them. We can be loyal and kind too.
Bible passage: Ruth 1–4. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:" *Ruth 1:16 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, 7 paper footprints and a marker for the verse game, about 40 strips of yellow paper for "barley," crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 7 footprints (see part 4). Put a bookmark in your Bible at Ruth 1:16.

1. Opening game: Follow Me (5 minutes)

Play follow the leader. Walk around the room, and the kids copy everything you do: walk slowly, climb a pretend hill, step over a rock, wave hello. Then let one child lead. Say: "Today we will hear a true story about a young woman who said, 'Wherever you go, I will go.' She did not turn back, even when it was hard."

2. Bible story: Whither Thou Goest (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Ruth 1, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Long ago, when judges ruled Israel, there was a **famine** in the land. That means there was not enough food (Ruth 1:1). A man from Bethlehem named Elimelech took his wife **Naomi** and their two sons to another country, called **Moab** (1:1–2).

Then sad things happened. Elimelech died (1:3). His two sons married women from Moab. Their names were **Orpah** and **Ruth** (1:4). About ten years later, both sons died too (1:4–5). Naomi was left with her two **daughters in law**, her sons' wives.

Naomi heard that God had given His people bread again back home (1:6). So she started back to her land, and Orpah and Ruth went with her (1:7). On the way Naomi said, "Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you" (1:8). She kissed them, and they cried (1:9). Orpah kissed Naomi goodbye and went back to her people (1:14–15). But Ruth **clave** to Naomi. That means she held on tight (1:14).

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The story continues: **Read Ruth 1:16 from your Bible:** "And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:" Say: "**Whither thou goest** means wherever you go. Ruth promised to stay with Naomi, and Naomi's God would be her God!" Ruth promised to stay with Naomi for the rest of her life (1:17).

So the two of them walked to **Bethlehem** (1:19). The whole city asked, "Is this Naomi?" (1:19). Naomi was very sad. She said, "Call me Mara," because, she said, "the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." Very sad things had happened to her (1:20–21). They came at the beginning of the **barley harvest**, when the barley grain was ready to cut (1:22).

Naomi had a **kinsman**, a relative from her husband's family, named **Boaz** (2:1). Ruth said, "Let me now go to the field, and **glean**." To glean means to pick up the grain the workers leave behind. Naomi said, "Go, my daughter" (2:2). Ruth came to the part of the field that belonged to Boaz (2:3)!

Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to his **reapers**, the workers cutting the grain, "The LORD be with you." They answered, "The LORD bless thee" (2:4). Boaz asked about Ruth. His servant said she had worked from the morning until now (2:5–7). Boaz told Ruth to stay in his field, and when she was thirsty, to drink the water his young men had drawn (2:8–9). Ruth bowed down and asked, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" (2:10). That means, "Why are you so kind to me?" Boaz said he had heard all that she had done for Naomi (2:11).

At mealtime Boaz gave Ruth bread and **parched corn**, roasted grain. She ate until she was full, and some was left (2:14). Then Boaz told his young men, "Let some **handfuls of purpose** fall for her." That means drop some grain on purpose, so she could pick it up (2:15–16)! Ruth gleaned until evening. She beat the grain out of the stalks, and she had about an **ephah** of barley, a big measure of grain (2:17). She took it home to Naomi, and she also gave Naomi the food she had saved from lunch (2:18). Naomi said, "Blessed be he of the LORD," and told Ruth that Boaz was one of their close family (2:20).

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The story continues: Naomi wanted Ruth to have a home of her own (3:1). Ruth did what Naomi told her, and she asked Boaz to take care of her, because he was a **near kinsman**, close family who could help (3:5–9). Boaz said everyone in the city knew Ruth was a **virtuous woman**, a good and worthy woman (3:11). He sent her home with six measures of barley for Naomi (3:15–17).

The next day Boaz went to the city gate and sat down with ten **elders**, the leaders of the city (4:1–2). Another man was closer family than Boaz, but he said, "I cannot" (4:6). He pulled off his shoe. That was how people in Israel made a promise sure back then (4:7–8). Boaz said, "Ye are witnesses" (4:9–10), which means "You all saw it."

So Boaz married Ruth, and God gave them a baby boy (4:13). The women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD" (4:14). They said Ruth loved Naomi and was better to her than seven sons (4:15). Naomi held the baby close and took care of him (4:16). His name was **Obed**. Obed became the father of Jesse, and Jesse was the father of King **David** (4:17)!

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. Who went back home, and who stayed with Naomi? *(Orpah went back; Ruth stayed, Ruth 1:14–15)*
2. What did Ruth say to Naomi? *("Whither thou goest, I will go," Ruth 1:16)*
3. What does glean mean? *(To pick up the grain the workers left behind, 2:2–3)*
4. What did Boaz tell his young men to drop for Ruth? *(Handfuls of purpose, grain dropped on purpose, 2:16)*
5. Who was Ruth's great-grandson? *(King David: Obed was the father of Jesse, the father of David, 4:17)*

4. Memory verse: Follow the Footprints (5 minutes)

Write one part on each footprint: *Intreat me not to leave thee, / or to return from following after thee: / for whither thou goest, I will go; / and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: / thy people shall be my people, / and thy God my God: / Ruth 1:16.* (The verse starts with "And Ruth said," which tells who is talking.) Explain the old words: **intreat** means beg, **whither** means where, **thou goest** means you go, and **lodgest** means you stay the night. Lay the footprints on the floor in a path. Kids walk the path one at a time, reading each footprint. Then turn one footprint over and walk it again. Keep turning footprints over until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Ruth said, 'Thy God my God.' She chose to follow the one true God, and God took care of her. God loves you very much too. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). He was born in the family of King David, Ruth's great-grandson (Matthew 1:1). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: be a loyal friend like Ruth. Stick by someone in your family or class, and do one kind thing for them, like Boaz did for Ruth.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Ruth and Naomi word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/ruth-word-search), the crossword, maze or worksheet, the Ruth and Naomi coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/ruth), or **Handfuls of Purpose:** one child is Ruth, and two or three children are Boaz's young men. The young men walk across the room and drop yellow paper "barley" strips on purpose, a few at a time. Ruth follows behind and gleans, picking them up. Count the barley together, then trade jobs until everyone has had a turn. Say: Boaz was kind on purpose. How can you be kind on purpose this week? (Ruth 2:15–16)

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for taking care of Ruth and Naomi. Help us be loyal and kind like Ruth and Boaz. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: Ruth chapter 3 is told briefly on purpose. If a child asks why Ruth went to the threshing floor, say simply: "Naomi wanted Ruth to have a home (Ruth 3:1). Boaz was close family who could help, and he did everything the right way, in front of the leaders at the city gate (4:9–10)." If a child has lost someone in their family, be gentle with the sad part of the story, and point to how God cared for Naomi (4:14–16).

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